

To: Lynnette Savino [lsavino1@verizon.net]
Cc: []
Bcc: []
From: CN=Dave Kluesner/OU=R2/O=USEPA/C=US
Sent: Thur 5/24/2012 8:04:42 PM
Subject: Re: The Observer: EPA predicts mud flat cleanup in Lyndhurst by Spring 2013
<http://www.theobserver.com/?p=7848>

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Hy Lynette:

Thank you for providing me with the information.

At the May 9 public information session EPA asked whether residents waded in the contaminated mud flats adjacent to Riverside Park. The answer from those in attendance and at the park earlier that week was "no". As we explained at the meeting we are working on a plan to isolate those contaminants from entering the environment.

As to the matter of fishing and crabbing in the Passaic River, we know that this activity has been observed in the Newark Bay Complex, including the tidal stretch of the river (Newark Bay to Garfield). That stretch of the Passaic is under a "Do Not Harvest / Do Not Eat" advisory for blue crabs and a "Do Not Eat" for all species of fish. Thus, anglers can catch fish but they should not eat the fish. Despite the advisories we know that some people do eat the fish and crabs. Thus we are embarking on a comprehensive program to clean contamination from the river sediments. EPA also is working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Health on the matter of signage and other outreach to ensure that the community is aware of the fish and shellfish bans and advisories.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

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From: Lynnette Savino <lsavino1@verizon.net>
To: Dave Kluesner/R2/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 05/24/2012 08:55 AM
Subject: Re: The Observer: EPA predicts mud flat cleanup in Lyndhurst by Spring 2013

Hi Dave,

I remember at the public meeting in Lyndhurst you asked if there was any issue with people fishing in the river, and I believe the answer was "no".

However, I drove over the Kingsland Ave bridge yesterday and observed a vehicle, a man, and a fishing pole on the Nutley side of the bridge and the Lyndhurst side of Route 21... ie on a small landing between the bridge and the entrance ramp to Route 21 North.

Probably should be posted if it is not already.

Thank you.

Lynnette Savino

From: Dave Kluesner <Kluesner.Dave@epamail.epa.gov>

To:

Sent: Thursday, May 17, 2012 9:31 AM

Subject: The Observer: EPA predicts mud flat cleanup in Lyndhurst by Spring 2013

<http://www.theobserver.com/?p=7848>

EPA predicts mud flat cleanup in Lyndhurst by Spring 2013

Posted On Wednesday, 16 May 2012 By Admin. Under News

Photo by Ron Leir/ Stephanie Vaughn

EPA Woman again

By Ron Leir

LYNDHURST –

The Little League and T-ball fields in Riverside County Park that Lyndhurst had previously placed off-limits due to environmental concerns are now deemed safe. But people should avoid wading in the polluted Passaic River mud flats contiguous to the park.

So say agents of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who briefed township residents on "plans for addressing contaminated Passaic River sediment" at two public forums held last Wednesday, May 9, at the Municipal Building.

"Very low levels of PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls; previously used as coolant fluid in transformers and electric motors), mercury and dioxin (a component of "Agent Orange") were found earlier this year in soil in the Lyndhurst and North Arlington sections of Riverside Park that likely were carried there by flooding," an EPA statement, released May 8, said.

But, the statement continued, "The concentrations of contaminants detected are well below established levels of concern for children and adolescents playing in the park and for workers maintaining the park."

EPA plans no further sampling of the park's playing fields, nor does it see a need for any remediation within the park itself, according to its statement.

Specifically, kids playing ball on fields nearest the riverbank and those involved in rowing on the river face "no immediate threat" to safety, said Stephanie Vaughn, project manager of EPA's 17-mile Passaic River cleanup.

"The public can continue to enjoy using Riverside County Park in Lyndhurst but should practice proper hygiene that would normally be followed at any urban park that is prone to flooding," the EPA statement said.

Vaughn said that means washing your hands, brushing mud off your shoes or off the paws of your dogs that you may be walking through the park.

These assurances aside, EPA will undertake a cleanup of the mud flats' sediment where, following sampling, the agency said it found "high levels of contaminants, including PCBs, mercury and dioxin."

Dioxin can cause cancer, PCBs are "suspected carcinogens" and mercury can damage the nervous system, the EPA statement said.

EPA is in the process of putting together a plan for cleaning up and restoring, in particular, an 8-mile portion of the lower Passaic River which, over many years, has been polluted by chemicals dumped by hundreds of industries along the river. That project would include a 1.5-mile stretch of mud flats in Lyndhurst and North Arlington.

EPA spokesman David Kluesner said the agency expects soon to finalize a legal agreement with the Cooperating Parties Group, 70 industries deemed responsible for polluting the river, who will be expected to "pay for and perform" the cleanup work.

By this fall, the final design for the cleanup job should be finished; then the agency will issue a Request for Proposals and receive bids from contractors. Work should start by spring or summer 2013, according to EPA projections.

The primary goal of the job is reduce exposure to contaminants and prevent migration of the contaminants to other parts of the river and to other riverbank parks, Vaughn said.

Preliminary plans call for removal of two feet of sediment from the mud flats, placement of a "cap" over the contaminated area to isolate the underlying sediment and, after the job is concluded, monitoring the effectiveness of the removal by samples taken several times during the year, until a final cleanup plan for the entire river is drafted, Vaughn said.

But, at this point, Vaughn acknowledged that there are still unanswered questions, such as:

- Are there additional tracts of the mud flats that may also require cleanup? Further sediment sampling is planned to help clarify that issue, Vaughn said.
- Where will the contaminated sediment be placed and/or stored as the cleanup progresses? Local officials worry that sections of Riverside Park may turn into dumping grounds for the pollutants.
- What type of cap will be used? That remains under study, said Vaughn.
- Will the public still have access to the park during the cleanup? That, too, is unclear, Vaughn said.

Lyndhurst couple Judy and Hermilio Vallavicencio, neighbors of the park who attended the May 9 EPA briefing, wonder what's taking so long for the agency to get started. A cancer survivor, Judy says: "I worry so much because I walk through the park with my grandchild. I've been walking there a long time. I hate to walk on the street." And Hermilio, who was diagnosed with cancer two years ago, added: "There used to be a playground in the park but they closed it last year and nobody can tell me why."

As the plan evolves, Kluesner said the agency will provide updates to the public. And those details will be posted on the EPA's lower Passaic River websites at <http://www.ourpassaic.org> or <http://www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/npl/diamondalkali/>. Or, the public may check in on these social media sites: <http://twitter.com/eparegion2> and <http://www.facebook.com/eparegion2>.

The public is also invited to attend meetings of the Passaic River Community Advisory Group. For more information, contact Kluesner at (212) 637-3653 or kluesner.dave@epa.gov.

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